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RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN 6887
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RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH 7735
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV 1821
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INFO RUEHNC/AMEMBASSY NICOSIA 7478

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DEPARTMENT FOR PA, NEA/ARN, INR/IC/CD, INR/R/MR:STHIBEAULT AND
JMCCARTER, VOA NEWS CA, NEA/PPD:CBOURGEOIS, AZAIBACK, AND
AFERNANDEZ, IIP/G/NEA-SA MDAVIDSON
WHITE HOUSE FOR NSC
CENTCOM FOR CCPA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KMDR](#) [PREL](#) [KPAO](#) [OPRC](#) [SY](#)

SUBJECT: Palestinian Territories, Lebanon, Syria/Israel, Iraq (6/15
to 6/17)

11. Summary: Syrian papers on June 15, 16 and 17 focused on the inter-Palestinian conflict in Gaza and the West Bank, the meeting of the Arab Foreign Minister in Cairo, and the Lebanese dispute between the majority and the opposition on holding by-elections to fill the seats of two assassinated anti-Syrian Members of Parliament.

The papers reported the Syrian Foreign Minister's denunciation of "the campaign of lies by some Lebanese used to accuse Syria after any crime and before an investigation even starts." Moallem underlined Syria's keenness on Lebanon's security and stability, and condemned practices of Fatah al-Islam and Jund al-Sham, considering them as a part of the al-Qaeda group in Iraq.

The papers covered the inter-Palestinian war in Gaza and the West Bank and highlighted the meeting of the Arab FMs held in Cairo in which Arab ministers called for an immediate halt to the fighting between the Palestinian [factions] in the Occupied Territories. The papers also reported that the meeting decided to dispatch a fact finding committee to the Territories.

The papers also covered the talks between Syrian Minister of Finance and Kuwaiti Minister of Finance who discussed means to enhance economic and financial relations between the two countries.

Papers also quoted British Minister of State for Middle East Affairs, Kim Howells, as saying that Syria plays an important role in the Middle East, describing Syria as a pivotal country in the region.

End of summary.

12. Selected Headlines:

"Arab FMs stress the unity of the Palestinian decision and call on the Lebanese to hold dialogue and avoid accusations and provocations" (Government-owned Tishreen, June 17, 2007)

"After guns got quiet in Gaza, a political battle between Fatah and Hamas," (Independent al Watan, June 17, 2007)

"The Lebanese opposition: the accusations against Syria lack

credibility and serve the US-Israeli project," (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 6/17)

"A British reiteration of the Syrian role; Howell: dialogue grows in an atmosphere of mutual confidence," (Government-owned Tishreen, 6/17)

"A cabinet meeting to follow up what has been accomplished in the framework of developing the Eastern Region," (Government-owned Al-Ba'th, 6/17)

13. Editorial Block Quotes:

"Fighting over Gaza"

Marwan Kabalan, a commentator in al-Watan, wrote (6/17): "We are not naive enough to call on Hamas and Fatah to stop their internal fighting in the name of fraternity, partnership, or the good of the Palestinian people, since this logic has proven to be futile, after the collapse of all mediations and the toppling of all agreements which have tried in vain to stop fighting or at least postpone it. We call on them in the name of Reason and we tell them, "If you must fight, fine, provided that there is a state to fight in and a real authority to fight for."

"What is this fighting for? The Palestinian President (from Fatah) cannot leave his office without a permission from the Israelis, and his PM (from Hamas) can be seen very rarely. What is this fighting for if half of the MPs are in the Israeli jails?"

"This entire fighting is for the 360 square kilometers from which Israel was forced to withdraw. The question is what will happen if Israel withdrew from the entire West Bank of 5000 square kilometers?"

"A disappointment or a death announcement for the US project?"

Mohyidin Mohamad, a commentator in government-owned Tishreen, wrote (6/17): "The US Defense Secretary expressed disappointment for not achieving any progress at the security level in Iraq... As the American officials choose their words very carefully, they avoid telling the bitter truth (...) that the American 'security plans' have failed, and the American occupation of Iraq has failed in achieving its goals. It also [has resulted] in expensive costs that the American people can no longer afford.

"The American Defense Secretary as well as all the other Administration officials know that the 'security plans' (...) will only lead to more resistance, because any action will be met with an equal reaction. They also know that wagering on a sectarian war in Iraq may postpone the announcement of the ultimate defeat of the invading troops. That is why we see that the blowing up of the (Shiite) shrines and (Sunni) mosques is (...) nothing but an American attempt to convince international public opinion and American public opinion that what happens in Iraq is a mere sectarian war that Iraqis are waging against one another."

(...) The US Administration, looking in pain at the death of its colonial project in the region, is trying to revive it, not via its troops and military forces, but rather via alternate schemes, though fighting among brothers in Iraq, Lebanon and Palestine. And we are required now to properly resist this new scheme."

Roebuck